

Sunday 12th April EASTER DAY 2020

Read Matthew 28.1-10

The church buildings are empty...so was the tomb!

This is the reality of our Easter faith in 2020. In and from our current isolation and lockdown we can and do celebrate the power of the risen Christ, as church where we are, declaring with confidence- *Alleluia, Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed, alleluia.*

The events of the first Easter were not instant and overwhelming joy. We read in the gospels of puzzlement, confusion, bewilderment, and fear. In his Easter Day account Matthew contrasts the response of the two Marys with those of two men also mentioned.

The men, the guards, fail miserably as they cave in to fear upon the appearance of an angel likened to lightning and earthquake. They are the representatives and defenders of the religious establishment whose job it is to guard the existing state of being, instead they faint and end up useless.

The two women, on the other hand, stand firm, yes, they are afraid – who wouldn't be with all that has gone on in the past two or three days, but with staying power and resilience – they continue to be consistent, reliable and faithful and show the same commitment with Jesus' mission as they have throughout his public ministry. They are here to play their part, to experience and to be witnesses to the unfolding of the Christian story.

What they experience is rather peculiar in the greater scheme of things: they find the tomb empty (where they were expecting a body to deal with). But what is an empty tomb proof of? – nothing, apart from its emptiness ...so they balance on the edge, the threshold between life and death, between death and new life, looking forward, reaching out into unknown space, hopeful.

Looking down into the empty tomb, they hear the words of the angel: "Don't be afraid, I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He's not here, he has been raised. Go and tell his disciples ..."

There is no other proof, ... except the experience of the two women, and later on that of the other disciples ...

This story is like a piece of poetry which invites us to explore a new dimension of human life until then unknown, opening new possibilities of being and doing. We are certainly learning new ways of being and doing in these days, I invite you to continue to go deeper with God in this Easter season, remembering that the God who calls us and is faithful.

The Easter story gives each of us an invitation, to share our experience of the Risen Christ, and, as we stand on threshold between life and death and new life, to look forward, to reach out with hope. *Alleluia, Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed, alleluia.*



With Blessing this Easter Day

Rev'd Rich Henderson (Rector & Parish Priest)